

CIA director asks for better cooperation with universities

From Caroline Davidson
in New York

The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency has begun to campaign hard for better relations and increased cooperation between the academic world and the US intelligence community.

At the weekend, after a week of Senate cross-examination about Cuban activities in Africa, Admiral Stansfield Turner came to Yale to address the American Association of University Professors. The association, America's largest organisation of college and university teachers and research students, has been highly critical of CIA activities on the campus.

Admiral Turner told the association that the US had lost its former military, economic, and political pre-eminence. The world was growing increasingly complex, and a "mutually supported relationship between the CIA and the academic community" was more important than ever before.

Academics had helped intelligence agencies in the past by recruiting American and for-

eign students, providing information on an informal basis and undertaking paid research. This should continue in the future, Admiral Turner said. Such cooperation defended democracy and freedom, helped to prevent war, and was a contribution towards narrowing the gap between rich and poor countries.

When challenged, Admiral Turner defended the CIA's right to recruit among America's brightest graduates in competition with business and other organisations without restrictions. He said the CIA recruited "very few" of the 120,000 foreign students in American higher education. He also argued that it was wasteful for intelligence agencies to gather information by clandestine means overseas when it could be obtained by talking to academics at home.

Admiral Turner said there were many ways the CIA could help academics in return. Existing publishing programmes could be extended and information declassified more quickly. Scholars would also benefit from some CIA technology: archaeologists, for example, could use the latest aerial sur-

vey techniques in identifying and studying new sites. He did not discuss any financial reward.

Answering questions about CIA activities on campus threatening academic freedom, Admiral Turner said academics working for the CIA were not victims of coercion and were free to declare their connection publicly if they chose.

Admiral Turner, who became CIA Director in March, 1977, told the AAUP he wanted to establish a new model of intelligence for the US. Intelligence agencies should be as open as possible and subject to many different supervisory controls. All intelligence agents should be accountable for their actions, adding that he was personally involved in writing a code of ethics for the profession.

In many ways, Admiral Turner, who has overall responsibility for all US intelligence got off lightly. He was not pressed to explain the apparent suppression of university research — in certain sensitive areas, such as computer security, by the National Security Agency, a sister body to the CIA.